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Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories

Work of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories

Report of the Secretary-General

1. The present report is submitted in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 61/116 of 14 December 2006, the operative part of which reads as follows:

> "The General Assembly,
>
> "...
>
> "1. *Commends* the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories for its efforts in performing the tasks assigned to it by the General Assembly and for its impartiality;
>
> "2. *Reiterates its demand* that Israel, the occupying Power, cooperate, in line with its obligations as a State Member of the United Nations, with the Special Committee in implementing its mandate;
>
> "3. *Deplores* those policies and practices of Israel that violate the human rights of the Palestinian people and other Arabs of the occupied territories, as reflected in the report of the Special Committee covering the reporting period;
>
> "4. *Expresses grave concern* about the critical situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, since 28 September 2000, as a result of unlawful Israeli practices and measures, and especially condemns all Israeli settlement activities and the construction of the wall, as well as the excessive and indiscriminate use of force against the civilian population, including extrajudicial executions;

* A/62/150.

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"5. *Welcomes* the free and democratic Palestinian Legislative Council elections that took place on 25 January 2006 and welcomes also the efforts to form a national unity government working towards a peaceful resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, based on relevant United Nations resolutions and the agreements concluded between the two sides;

"6. *Requests* the Special Committee, pending complete termination of the Israeli occupation, to continue to investigate Israeli policies and practices in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and other Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967, especially Israeli violations of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, and to consult, as appropriate, with the International Committee of the Red Cross according to its regulations in order to ensure that the welfare and human rights of the peoples of the occupied territories are safeguarded and to report to the Secretary-General as soon as possible and whenever the need arises thereafter;

"7. *Also requests* the Special Committee to submit regularly to the Secretary-General periodic reports on the current situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem;

"8. *Further requests* the Special Committee to continue to investigate the treatment of the thousands of prisoners and detainees in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and other Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967;

"9. *Requests* the Secretary-General:

(a) To provide the Special Committee with all necessary facilities, including those required for its visits to the occupied territories, so that it may investigate Israeli policies and practices referred to in the present resolution;

(b) To continue to make available such staff as may be necessary to assist the Special Committee in the performance of its tasks;

(c) To circulate regularly to Member States the periodic reports mentioned in paragraph 7 above;

(d) To ensure the widest circulation of the reports of the Special Committee and of information regarding its activities and findings, by all means available, through the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat and, where necessary, to reprint those reports of the Special Committee that are no longer available;

(e) To report to the General Assembly at its sixty-second session on the tasks entrusted to him in the present resolution;

"10. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its sixty-second session the item entitled "Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories."

2. The Special Committee met in Geneva from 19 to 23 March to review its work and make plans for its field visit to the Middle East scheduled to be made from 21 July to 4 August. The Committee also held a half-day session on 20 July.

3. During its sessions in Geneva, the Special Committee held consultations with relevant representatives of permanent missions, United Nations agencies, intergovernmental organizations, the International Committee of the Red Cross and international non-governmental organizations.

Department of Public Information

4. The Department of Public Information disseminated information on the work of the Special Committee during the period covering August 2006 to July 2007, using various means of information dissemination at its disposal.

5. Through its news and media products, the Department ensured that abundant information on the Committee's work and findings was made available to global audiences and broadcast partners in the six official languages of the Organization.

6. The United Nations News Service of the Department provided regular coverage of the Special Committee, raising its profile by posting stories on its activities and findings on the United Nations News Centre website and e-mailing them to tens of thousands of interested subscribers, including hundreds of journalists.

7. The Meetings Coverage Section of the Department issued nine press releases in English and nine in French on the Special Committee during the reporting period, including the Special Political and Decolonization (Fourth) Committee's consideration of the agenda item during the sixty-first session of the General Assembly.

8. United Nations Television covered various aspects of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and related issues in its current affairs, programmes and its live webcasts of meetings of intergovernmental bodies and press conferences held at Headquarters. United Nations Television also provided regular coverage through UNifeed, its six-day-a-week satellite transmission service. During the reporting period, over 40 UNifeed news reports were forwarded to over 500 broadcasters worldwide.

9. United Nations Radio extensively covered the work and findings of the Committee in its news bulletins and current affairs magazines in the six official languages at Headquarters. In addition to direct coverage of the Committee, United Nations Radio produced news and features on a broad range of related subjects, from developments on the ground to humanitarian needs and relief efforts to political and diplomatic interventions and activities.

10. The Department also ensured that web pages on the question of Palestine were updated and maintained in the six official languages on the www.un.org website under its Global Issues page, with links to other related pages, including the database of the United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine (UNISPAL).

11. The Dag Hammarskjöld Library continued its cooperation with the Division for Palestinian Rights to digitize older United Nations documents for posting on the Official Document System and on UNISPAL.

12. The Special Committee's report was distributed to the media, non-governmental organizations and educational institutions by United Nations Information Centres, Information Services and Offices. The United Nations Information Centre in Cairo translated a press release issued by the Special

Committee and disseminated it to Egyptian and other Arab newspapers and news agencies. The Information Centre also arranged a press conference and television interviews for members of the Committee. The United Nations Information Service in Geneva served as media liaison for the Human Rights Council, which during the reporting period dealt with the question of human rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

13. In compliance with various General Assembly resolutions, the Department, in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan and the United Nations University in Tokyo organized an international media seminar on peace in the Middle East, held in Tokyo, on 26 and 27 June 2007, during which the latest developments relating to the Middle East peace process, including the human rights situation, were discussed. The Department also held an annual training programme for 10 young Palestinian media practitioners from 6 November to 11 December 2006 at Headquarters, which included briefings on human rights and coverage of the work of the General Assembly relating to the question of Palestine.